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BOOK REVIEW

Diversity of insect faunas. Symposia of the Royal Entomological Society of London: Number nine. Ed. by Laurence Mound & Nadia Waloff. 1978. Blackwell Scientific Publications (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., One Wiley Drive, Somerset, NJ 08873). Hardbound, x + 204 p., \$37.50.

Subject matter is summarized in the editors' foreword, here parroted: "Variability of living organisms, and one of its results the diversity of faunas, has always occupied the minds of biologists. Recently, this theme has received a fresh impetus and has been reinvigorated by the critical examination of the relevant mathematical models by theoretical biologists, by the experimental approach of ecologists and by the new data obtained by palaeoecologists. This volume presents the different approaches of an international group of scientists, from a variety of biological disciplines, to this fundamental and rapidly expanding theme.

"The taxonomist is concerned with the constituents of diversity and their origin, whereas the ecologist is concerned with understanding the present day complexity of the systems of living organisms. Insects lend themselves well to these studies as their small size and the intricacies of their behavioural and physiological responses enable them to utilise a multitude of microhabitats within the different ecosystems. This, and their great motility and aerial dispersal, enables them to respond to environmental changes in space and time, and it is these attributes that may lie at the root of their diversification and diversity."

"This volume comprises the twelve papers which were read at the Ninth Symposium . . . held in Imperial College, London, on 22-23 September 1977."

Contributors include 1 from Finland, 4 from the USA, and 7 from Britain. There is an entomological slant, but only one paper (G. R. Coope: "Constancy of insect species versus inconstancy of Quaternary environments") has Coleoptera as its primary data base—and this is an excellent paper, indeed.

Production quality is excellent, and there are even two colored plates (of, ugh!, butterflies). I assume, as one would expect, that content is somewhat uneven in quality; however, most of the content is far beyond my competence to judge critically. I suspect that most readers of the *Bulletin* will find that the price tag outweighs desirability of possession. Those with a strong ecological bent, however, should examine a library copy from which to form their own opinions. Overall, I would expect this book to enjoy a rather wide distribution.

—D. R. W.